

# Understanding The Organisational Buyer Behaviour Of Craft Retailers In South Africa

K.M Makhitha, Vaal University of Technology, South Africa

## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of the study was to investigate the buyer behaviour of craft retailers in South Africa (SA). Specifically, the study investigated the stages in the buying process craft retailers go through when buying crafts from the craft producers. Craft retailers play a dominant role in the craft industry value chain yet craft producers face difficulties selling to this market. Instead, they resort to selling directly to end consumers and not through craft retailers. An understanding of craft retailer and buyer behaviour is a necessity for craft producers who want to sell their products successfully through the craft retailers. A survey was conducted among 233 craft retailers in SA. A convenience sampling method was adopted for the study. The findings revealed that craft retailers go through homogenous buying stages. The stages in the buying process did not differ across different types of craft retailers. The stages also did not differ according to the years of buying experience of craft retailers. An understanding of buyer behaviour of craft retailers would be necessary for craft producers who want to target craft retailers, since they (craft producers) will be able to formulate appropriate and effective marketing strategies targeted at craft retailers. Craft retailers go through a lengthy process when buying crafts. Craft producers, therefore, need to understand the stages that craft retailers go through to ensure that the understanding is incorporated into their marketing strategy.*

**Keywords:** Organisational Buyer Behaviour; Craft; Craft Retailers; Craft Producers; Marketing Strategy; Buying Process; Buying Stages

## INTRODUCTION

The development of the craft industry is a key strategy of the South African (SA) government for sustainable development and the creation of employment opportunities (Department of Labour, 2011). The industry also contributes to economic growth and environmental stewardship (UN, 2008; UN, 2010). The importance of the craft industry is evidenced by government initiatives, research, projects and entities that have been initiated in support of the industry such as the Cultural Industries Growth Strategy (Department of Arts, Culture, Science & Technology, 1998) the Sector Development Strategy (DTI, 2005), Gauteng Creative Industries: Craft sector (Department of Sports, Arts, Recreation & Culture, 2007), and Gauteng Craft Development strategy (Department of Sports, Arts, Recreation & Culture, 2007) as well as the development of the Kwazulu-Natal Integrated Craft Hub (Department of Economic Development, 2009).

The industry has grown in importance in SA as seen by the formation of the Cape Craft and Design Institute (CCDI) in the Western Province, the Gauteng Craft and Design Centre in Gauteng province and the North West Craft Design Centre, which are proof of government recognition of the importance of this industry to the SA economy. The Department of Trade and Industry has also launched the Craft Enterprise Support Fund with the aim of assisting craft organisations to overcome their lack of access to raw materials (DTI, 2010).

The craft industry contributes about R2 billion to the gross domestic product (GDP) in retail sales, with craft retailers playing a dominant role in the craft industry value chain (Kaiser & Associates, 2005). There has been a growing increase in the number of craft producers and craft retailers in SA (Department of Sports, Arts, Recreation

& Culture, 2007) as a result of a growing demand for craft products in the world market as well as the increase in the demand for souvenir products purchased by tourists during their travels (United States Agency for International Development, 2006; Moreno & Littrell, 2001).

The role of craft retailers has also grown in importance as craft producers look into all available and alternative channels for distributing their products (Department of Sports, Arts, Recreation & Culture, 2007). Craft retailing takes place in 750 craft stores and other types of stores such as galleries, museums, small interior shops, gift shops and craft markets as well as national chains such as clothing shops, interior décor shops, furniture stores, hypermarkets, discount stores and jewellery shops (Department of Labour 2008; DTI, 2005). This requires that craft producers understand the buyer behaviour of craft retailers so they can formulate an effective sales and marketing strategy targeted at craft retailers.

The craft industry is the second biggest industry after agriculture to provide employment opportunities for the poor (Basu, 1995 in Littrell & Miller, 2001), yet few studies exist on the craft industry in SA. Therefore, research on the industry is a necessity, not only for the sustainability of craft producers but also for the growth of the craft industry.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The Craft Industry In South Africa (SA)**

Owing to the diversified nature of the craft industry, there is no universally accepted definition of crafts. In SA, a craft product is defined as “the creation and production of a broad range of utilitarian and decorative items produced on a small scale, with hand processes being the significant part of the value-added content. The production of goods uses a range of natural and synthetic materials” (Department of Arts, Culture, Science & Technology, 1998). Crafts are also known as handicraft or artisanal products. Artisanal products are defined as “those produced by artisans, either completely by hand, or with the help of hand tools or even mechanical means, as long as the direct manual contribution of the artisan remains the most substantial component of the finished product. These are produced using raw materials from sustainable resources. The special nature of artisanal products derives from their distinctive features, which can be utilitarian, aesthetic, creative, culturally attached, decorative, functional, religiously and socially symbolic and significant” (UNESCO, 1997). Both definitions emphasise the importance of the hand component during the production of craft products and are useful in providing an understanding of what a craft product entails.

Craft products include a wide range of products such as home furnishings, jewellery, fashion and fashion accessories, novelties and gifts, including corporate gifts, garden and outdoor products, curios and collectibles, one-of-a-kind high-value individually made products, and indigenous artefacts, which are culturally derived products (Department of Labour, 2011; DTI, 2005). Rogerson (2010) posits that craft products must be 80 percent handmade from different materials, which may include clay, natural fibres, beads, recyclable materials and textiles.

Usually craft production is initiated in regions where it is still regarded as a way of life. Craft product designs are traditional and functional in nature (Wesgro, 2000). Regions such as Gauteng and the Western Cape have the highest population of crafters because of urbanisation and the fact that they have an established tourism industry (Wesgro, 2000). Although Gauteng and the Western Cape provinces are the major craft hubs, the study will investigate craft retailers in South Africa. This will allow for a broader investigation of what is happening in SA.

The majority of craft producers are female (Department of Sports, Arts, Recreation & Culture, 2007). Most of the craft producers are adults, although a fair number of young people are active in the industry. Most craft producers are self-taught, although some have taken art lessons at school or learned a craft from other people in the community. Among craft producers, the general education level is low (Urban-Econ Tourism, 2010). Craft producers lack the skills necessary to conduct business and run organisations. As a result, they are unable to identify market opportunities and where they are able to identify the market opportunities, they are unable to pursue them because of their limited skills (Department of Sports, Arts, Recreation & Culture, 2007). The lack of skills and

limited access to resources affects their ability to match the quality standards and production capacity needed by their customers (Wesgro, 2000).

### **Organisational Buyer Behaviour**

Organisational buyer behaviour refers to the process organisations go through when buying products or services (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009). Traditionally, organisational buying was associated with manufacturers rather than retailers. This is partly because retailers are concerned mainly with buying and selling while manufacturers buy products such as raw materials to produce other goods (Weele, 2005). As a result, manufacturers have embraced organisational buying as a strategic tool since it affects the quality as well as the cost of what they produce, which in turn, affects profitability. However, customer demands for quality products, competitive pressures, globalisation, space management, green issues and changing customer needs have made it necessary for retailers to embrace organisational (retail) buying as one of their strategic tasks since what they are buying determines whether they will be able to attract customers and make profit (Pressey, Winkholfer, & Tzokas, 2009).

A number of organisational and retail buyer behaviour models exist. The first organisational buyer behaviour model is the Robinson, Faris and Wind (1967) model. This model has been the most researched and most widely applied and published (Farrell, 2006; Da Silva, Davies & Naude, 2002; Homburg & Kuester, 2001; Mawson & Fearn, 1997). Generally, it is known as the buy grid model. The model consists of the two sub-models, the buy phase and the buy class models. The buy phase model shows the stages that organisations follow in the buying process. There are eight stages, including recognition of a problem, determination of the product type needed, description of the product type needed, search for and qualification of potential suppliers, requisition and analysis of proposal, evaluation of proposal and selection of suppliers, selection of order routine and performance review (Hutt & Speh, 2007).

The buy class model consists of three buying situations, new task buying, modified buying and the straight rebuy. Buyers go through different stages in the buying process depending on the buying situation (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009). For instance, a buyer who is buying a product for the first time and has no knowledge of the product will go through all the stages in the buying process. The new task-buying situation takes place when buyers perceive the problem or need as completely different from previous buying experiences. As such, they require a significant amount of information in order to explore the set of suppliers available (Weele, 2005). The buyer may search information about the organisation and its products or trends and developments in consumer behaviour (Johansson, 2002). Craft retailers often expand their product range (Department of Sports, Arts, Recreation & Culture, 2007) and are continuously identifying for new products. They also search for new suppliers from time to time (USAID, 2006), which implies that they are constantly involved in new buying situations. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to determine the buying process that craft retailers follow when involved in a new task-buying situation.

The other models were developed for organisational buyer behaviour but provide the basis for studying retail buyer behaviour. The Webster and Wind model (1972) is similar to the Robinson *et al.* model (1967) in that they both depict the process buyers follow when involved in the buying decision. The difference is that the Webster and Wind (1972) model has fewer stages than that of Robinson *et al.* (1967).

The Sheth (1981) model is an updated model developed from the Sheth (1973) model. The Sheth (1973) model is a comprehensive and integrative model initially developed for industrial buyer behaviour. The Sheth (1981) retail buyer behaviour model was developed to overcome some weaknesses in the Sheth (1973) model, which was more suitable for industrial than for retail buying. The Sheth (1981) model focused on the factors affecting the decision-making process and the criteria used by retail buyers when buying products and were designed specifically for retail stores regardless of their size. De Boer, Labro and Morlacchi (2001) conceptualised the process of supplier selection as consisting of four stages, the problem definition, the formulation of criteria, the qualification of suppliers and choice. Although this is not a model, but a retailers' buying process depicted by Weele (2005), it is necessary to review these stages since the study investigates the buying process of craft retailers of different types in South Africa. Weele (2005) proposed six stages in the buying process of a retailer. These consists of estimating the demand, determination of assortment policy and distribution strategy, search for and qualification of suppliers,

evaluation of suppliers, selection of order routine and performance feedback. The stages are shown in Table 1 below.

Luo, Wu, Rosenberg and Barnes (2009) conceptualised the buying process as consisting of four stages, the supplier selection preparation, pre-classification, final selection and application feedback. By adopting the stages from the above models, this study will investigate the buying process and stages followed by craft retailers when buying craft products. Table 1 summarises the six models discussed above. The table clearly shows the different stages buyers go through in the buying process, according to the different models discussed.

Table 1

Stage In The Buying Process	Robinson <i>et al.</i> , 1967	Webster & Wind, 1972	Sheth 1981	De Boer <i>et al.</i> model (2001)	Luo <i>et al.</i> model (2009)	Weele (2005)	Stages Investigated In This Work
Problem recognition	√	√		√			Problem recognition
Estimation of the demand for a particular product						√	Estimating the demand for a particular product
Determination of product assortment policy and distribution strategy						√	Determine product assortment policy and distribution strategy
Determination of characteristic and quantity needed	√						Determination of characteristic and quantity needed
Precise description of characteristic and quantity of items needed	√	√					Precise description of characteristic and quantity of items needed
Determination of and decision on the supplier selection criteria to be used			√	√	√		Determine and decide on the supplier selection criteria to be used
Search for and qualification of potential sources	√	√	√			√	Search for and qualification of potential sources
Acquisition and analysis of suppliers	√	√		√	√		Acquisition and analysis of suppliers
Evaluation of proposals and selection of suppliers	√	√	√	√	√	√	Evaluation of proposals and selection of suppliers
Selection of order routine	√					√	Selection of order routine
Performance feedback evaluation	√				√	√	Performance feedback evaluation

Various authors on organisational buyer behaviour identified different stages that buyers go through when buying products from their suppliers. Robinson *et al.* (1967) proposed eight stages in the buying process while De Boer *et al.* (2001) and Luo *et al.* (2009) suggested five and four stages respectively. Weele (2005) discussed six stages retailers go through when buying, arguing that retailers go through different stages in the buying process of an organisation. The above authors investigated the stages from the perspective of manufacturing organisations, while Weele (2005) discussed the stages from the perspective of retailers.

Ghingold and Wilson (1998) and Burger and Cann (1995) identified six stages in the buying process. Applying the Robinson *et al.* (1967) model to buying by restaurants, Mawson and Fearn (1997) found that restaurants go through an extended decision-making process, with eight buying stages. Fawzy and Samra (2008) listed nine stages in the process of buying and selection of a meeting site. The stages in the buying process vary for different product types, organisations and across countries (Johansson & Burt, 2004; Johansson, 2001).

The quality of products and suppliers which retailers select when buying depends on the buying stages followed prior to selecting craft products and suppliers (Sen, Basligil, Sen & Baracli 2008). Some retailers engage in an extended buying process and follow many stages when buying new products, while others go through fewer stages (Johansson, 2002). The number of buying stages differs depending on the relationship between the buyer and

the supplier (Johansson, 2001; Johansson, 2002). Retailers of different types also exhibit different communication and buying patterns because of the manner in which they organise their buying function (Johansson, 2002), thus leading to different stages in the buying process. Paige and Littrell (2002) stated that craft retailers differ in terms of product assortment qualities, such as where they buy their products and the uniqueness, quality and quantity of craft products they buy. This leads to craft retailers formulating different marketing strategies, which in turn, influence their buyer behaviour.

The buying process, especially the supplier search stage, is influenced by the experience of a buyer. Some buyers look for suppliers from within their existing supply relationships, indicating the importance of the buying experience during the buying process (Johansson & Burt, 2004). According to Webster and Wind (1996), the learning experience of the buyer influences the buying decision. Da Silva *et al.* (2002) posit that less experienced buyers exhibit different buyer behaviour compared to the experienced buyers. Since buyers are evaluated on the margins they can attain (Da Silva *et al.*, 2002), they could spend more time and effort searching and evaluating suppliers. Buyers involved in repeat purchase situation develop a structured choice process, while those involved in other situations would be involved in a different choice process (Bunn, Butaney & Hoffman, 2001; Sproule & Archer, 2000). This implies that buyers will go through different buying processes, depending on experience in buying a product.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES**

Craft producers in Gauteng, South Africa experience difficulties selling to craft retailers (Department of Sports, Arts, Recreation and Culture, 2007; Wesgro, 2000). As a result, some craft producers resort to selling directly to end consumers, using direct channels instead of selling through the retailers (Wesgro, 2000), this despite the growing role of craft retailers in the craft industry value chain. Craft retailers are creators of the markets, developers of new products and are also able to source new products (Hay, 2008). There is an active retail market for craft producers. However, craft producers do not have access to such markets. This is due to a lack of understanding of the organisational buyer behaviour of craft retailers. Such an understanding would help suppliers to capitalise on the increased demand for their products (Skallerud & Gronhaug, 2010) and be in a position to formulate effective and appropriate marketing strategies targeted at craft retailers.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the organisational buyer behaviour of craft retailers in South Africa. The specific focus was to determine the stages in the buying process followed by craft retailers when buying craft products

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To determine the buying stages that craft retailers go through when buying crafts
- To ascertain if the buying stages differ across different types of craft retailers
- To determine if the buying stages differ according to the years of buying experience of craft retailers.

To address the above objectives, two hypotheses were formulated:

- H<sub>1</sub>** There are significant differences between types of craft retailers and the number of buying stages they go through.
- H<sub>2</sub>** There are significant differences between the years of buying experience of craft retailers and the buying stages they go through.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a survey method targeted at craft retailers in South Africa. This included craft retailers of different types and sizes such as craft shops, small interior and gift stores, interior and decor shops, discounts retailers, clothing shops, furniture shops, museums, galleries, jewellery shops and destination retailers. A non-probability convenience sampling method was adopted owing to the difficulties of identifying craft retailers and the fact that there was no reliable and easily accessible database of craft retailers. According to Cooper and Schindler (2006) convenience sampling is suitable when there is time constraints and lists of available units are either incomplete or not up-to date, as is the case of South African craft retailers.

Data were collected electronically through email as well as personally hand delivered questionnaires to craft retailers for self-completion. The data were collected during November 2012 and March 2013. The total number of questionnaires sent out to craft retailers was 681, and 233 were considered usable, yielding a response rate of 34 percent. The remaining 40 questionnaires were incomplete, with some questionnaires only half-done, or missing multiple responses. Due to the low response rate, data were collected from formal craft retailers operating in six provinces, including Gauteng, Western Cape, Kwazulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, North West and Eastern Cape.

The questionnaire was of self-completion nature and was designed using information collected from a preliminary qualitative study (interviews), which was conducted among craft retailers and industry experts as well as from the literature. The results of the qualitative interviews confirmed the buying stages already identified from literature, as well as identifying five additional stages that were included such as 'we visit and/or interact with the supplier to learn more about them', 'we place trial orders/s and finalise the approval of suppliers', 'we negotiate trading terms with suppliers', 'we develop contractual agreement with the supplier' and 'we place replenishment orders i.e more quantities after the first trial order'. Respondents were requested to indicate if they go through the 16 stages listed on the questionnaire by answering yes or no. The questionnaire was pre-tested using the participant pre-test method with 12 craft retailers and the wording of some questions was slightly altered to ensure clarity. Furthermore, craft retailers did not receive any incentives and participation was voluntarily.

Data were analysed using SAS software. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA tests were conducted and the results are reported and discussed in the next section. ANOVA is a statistical analysis used to test the differences between two means (Sudman & Blair, 1998) and helps estimate group differences based on their group means. Where the estimates of scores and means do not differ, it is assumed that all the group means originate from the same sampling distribution of means. Where the group means differ more than expected, it can be concluded that the group means were drawn from the different sampling distribution of means, and the null hypothesis that the means are the same is rejected (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). As ANOVA indicates differences only, the Duncan's multiple range test, a post-hoc test, which makes comparisons among groups to determine if significant differences exist (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010), was used to identify where these differences between groups were.

## **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS**

### **Descriptive statistics**

The sample consisted of various types of retailers as shown in Table 2. Of the 233 respondents, 94 were craft stores, representing 43 percent of the total population. Destination retailers were the next biggest group, representing about 16 percent (n=35) of the population, followed by the small interior/gift stores with about 12 percent (n=27) of the population. The rest of the respondents, clothing stores, discount stores, furniture stores, galleries, museums, jewellery shops and destination retailers, had a very small representation.



**Table 2: Types Of Craft Retailers**

<b>Types Of Craft Retailers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Craft store	94	43
Small interior/gift store	27	12
Interior decor/home ware store such as Mr Price Home	13	6
Clothing store such as Woolworths or Truworths	7	3
Discount store such as Makro or Game	2	1
Furniture store	8	4
Gallery	7	3
Museum	5	2
Jewellery shop	16	7
Destination retailers	35	16
Other (please specify)	6	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100</b>

n= 220 Missing responses = 13

Author's own contribution

For the purpose of statistical analysis, craft retailers were collapsed into five groups: the craft stores; small interior/gift stores; large retailers such as interior décor/homeware stores, clothing stores, discount stores and furniture stores; speciality stores such as galleries, museums and jewellery shops; and destination retailers. The five groups excluded the 'other' category since there were no types of retailers mentioned. Therefore, the five groups consisted of 214 responses. The representation of the five groups were as follows: craft stores (44%), small interior/gift store (13%), large retailers such as clothing and décor stores (14%), speciality stores such as galleries, museums and jewellery shop (13%) and destination retailers (16%).

The respondents consisted of buyers, managers, owner-managers, manager-buyers and executives responsible for buying. The owner-managers were the largest group, comprising 44 percent (n=101) of the population. Managers were the second largest group of respondents, comprising over 18 percent (n= 42) of the population. This was followed by manager-buyers, with about 14 percent of the population (n=31). Buyers made up over 12 percent of the population (n=28). The last group of respondents were the executives, who represented about 12 percent of the population, consisting of 27 respondents.

Table 3 depicts the stages craft retailers go through. The frequencies and percentages as well as the number of respondents are shown.

**Table 3: Stages In The Buying Process**

Stages In The Buying Process	N	Frequency		Percentages	
We identify a need for craft products	233	219	14	93.99	6.01
We determine the characteristics and/or quantity of the craft products needed	232	210	22	90.52	9.48
We create a precise description of the craft products needed	231	154	77	66.67	33.33
We estimate the demand for a particular craft item	231	195	36	84.42	15.58
We determine the product assortment i.e. product lines/range and number of product per product line	230	188	42	81.74	18.26
We decide how much stock to keep, and therefore, how much to invest	233	194	39	83.26	16.74
We formulate the criteria that will be used to evaluate suppliers	232	170	62	73.28	26.72
We search for potential suppliers	232	202	30	87.07	12.93
We visit and/or interact with the supplier to learn more about them	232	187	45	80.60	19.40
We evaluate and/or select craft suppliers	233	203	30	87.12	12.88
We place trial order/s and finalise the approval of suppliers	232	168	64	72.41	27.59
We negotiate trading terms with suppliers	232	202	30	87.07	12.93
We develop a contractual agreement with the supplier	231	152	79	65.80	33.77
We place replenishment orders i.e. more quantities after the first trial order	232	176	56	75.86	24.14
We expedite and evaluate the supplier's and product performance	231	200	31	86.58	13.42
We provide the suppliers with feedback about their product performance	232	184	48	79.31	20.69

Author's own contribution

From Table 3 it is evident that the majority of craft retailers, as represented by 94 percent (N=219) of the respondents, indicated that they went through the stage of a need identification, and that 'we determine the characteristics and/or quantity of craft products needed', as indicated by 91 percent of respondents. Craft retailers do not all follow all the listed stages, as shown by the fact that 34 percent (N=79) of the respondents indicated that they did not go through the stage of developing a contractual agreement with the supplier, or 'create a precise description of craft products needed', as revealed by 33 percent (N=77) of respondents. Approximately 27 percent of the population (N=62) indicated that they also did not formulate criteria to evaluate suppliers. Generally, the results of the stages listed in the buying process indicate a fairly high percentage of agreement (Yes) among the respondents regarding the stages retail buyers go through.

The stage, which craft retailers use most when buying crafts, is 'we identify a need for craft products', as indicated by almost 94 percent of respondents. This stage was followed by 'we determine the characteristics and/or quantity of the craft products needed', as shown by over 91 percent of the sample, 'we evaluate and/or select craft suppliers', with just over 87 percent of the population, 'we negotiate trading terms of suppliers', represented by over 87 percent of the sample and 'we search for potential suppliers', represented also by over 87 percent of the sample.

The least-used stage in the buying process of a craft retailer is 'we develop a contractual agreement with the supplier', agreed to by about 66 percent of the sample, followed by 'we create a precise description of the craft products needed', which was agreed to by about 67 percent of the sample. The third least-used stage in the buying process of the craft retailers was found to be 'we place trial order/s and finalise the approval of suppliers', as indicated by over 72 percent of the sample. Another important aspect worth noting in the buying process is the fact that 28 percent (N=64) of craft retailers revealed that they did not place trial orders to finalise the approval of suppliers. Some craft retailers, as indicated by 34 percent of the respondents, did not enter into contractual agreements. It is evident that the majority of craft retailers go through a lengthy buying process.



The fact that some craft retailers do not develop contractual agreements with craft producers also applies with organisations sourcing products from informal and small organisations where verbal orders, agreements and price negotiations are made (Bienabe & Vermeulen, 2007). Previous studies have indicated that in some buying situations, buyers have difficulty in measuring or specifying the exact nature of the products needed and that buyers are more concerned about the quality and performance of the product (Francis & Brown, 1985-86). Another study revealed that the exact specification evolves from the samples, through appearance and product sampling (Mawson & Fearn, 1997:241).

Furthermore, Esbjerg and Skytte (1999) found that the majority of retailers placed trial orders before they sourced more products, which supports the findings of this study, where 72 percent of craft retailers placed trial orders before large orders were placed. According to Johansson and Burt (2004), the buying stages differ for the first stages of the buying process while the rest of the stages in the process are similar. This study found that the first two stages were undertaken by the majority of craft retailers, as shown by the 94 percent and 91 percent of craft retailers who went through these stages in comparison with the percentages of those retailers who went through the other stages such as 'we create a precise description of the craft'.

### Testing The Hypotheses

The first hypothesis serves to determine whether the number of buying stages differs across the five types of craft retailers. ANOVA testing was conducted to test  $H_1$  and the results are reflected in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Mean Scores And Anova Results For Stages Across Types Of Craft Retailers

Types Of Craft Retailers	N	M	SD	DF	F value	P value
Craft store	90	13.16	2.42	4	1.70	0.1506*
Small interior/gift stores	26	11.84	3.01			
Large stores	28	13.53	2.39			
Speciality stores	27	12.88	3.05			
Destination retailers	35	12.80	2.63			

Author's own contribution, \*P>0.05

As can be seen in the table, the p-value of 0.1506 is larger than the specified significance level of 5 percent, thus showing no significant differences in the mean values of the number of stages of the buying process and across different types of craft retailers. Thus, there is no significant difference in the stages craft retailers go through across types of craft retailers.  **$H_1$  was, therefore, not supported and the null hypothesis was accepted.** According to Johansson and Burt (2004), the number of buying stages is determined by the types of products being bought and might not be the same for different types of products. However, the findings in this study suggested that different types of craft retailers do not differ regarding the number of stages they go through.

To test the second hypothesis, ANOVA testing was done to determine if there were significant differences between the numbers of stages across the years of buying experience. These results are reported in Table 5. As can be seen in the table, the p-value of 0.3351 is larger than the specified significance level of 5 percent, thus showing no significant differences in the mean values of the stages across years of buying experience. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted and  $H_2$  was not supported.

**Table 5:** Mean Scores And ANOVA Results For Stages Across Years Of Buying Experience

Buying Experience	N	M	SD	DF	F value	P value
0-5 years	73	13.19	2.65	2	1.10	0.3351*
>5-10 years	69	13.00	2.30			
10+ years	64	12.62	2.95			

Author's own contribution, \*P>0.05

It can be concluded that craft retailers with different years of buying experience do not differ regarding the number of buying stages they go through when buying craft products. It seems that buying experience plays no significant role in the number of buying stages used.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The majority of craft retailers go through an extended buying process involving 16 stages. Craft producers must get involved in each of the stages in order to influence craft retailers' buyer behaviour. For example, the two most used stages are 'we recognise the need for craft products' and 'we determine the characteristics and quantity of products to be bought'. Craft producers could take new product ideas to craft retailers and discuss the ideas with them, thus enabling them to see if craft retailers like the idea and whether they will want to buy the product.

If craft producers become involved in the stage when craft retailers determine the characteristics and the quantity of products needed, they will be able to define product characteristics, which they must incorporate into their new products during the new product design and development stages. The involvement of the craft producer in the planning of quantities to be ordered will enable craft retailers to be aware of the available supply. However, this requires that craft producers develop close working relationships with craft retailers.

It is of the utmost importance that craft producers understand the specific product requirements of craft retailers so that they can develop products to meet those requirements. Since the majority of craft retailers (73%) formulate the supplier selection criteria for evaluating craft producers during the buying process, craft producers need to identify these criteria so that they can work on incorporating them in their marketing and business strategy. This can be achieved in different ways, such as by visiting craft retailers, bringing new product ideas or samples to discuss with them or by asking retailers what they look for in specific products. For those retailers that do not have a precise description of products during the buying process, craft producers would have to ensure that they develop products that match the most important supplier selection criteria so as to create an awareness of their products with craft retailers. Although the least-used stages are 'we expedite and evaluate the supplier's and product performance' and 'we provide the suppliers with feedback about product performance', craft producers should maintain contact with craft retailers in order to collect information about the retailer's assessment of their performance and that of their product/s, as well as to motivate retailers to keep them informed of their performance.

Since some craft producers are illiterate and might not have the resources necessary to adopt the above marketing strategy, government and its agencies could be approached for assistance. For example, government departments such as the Department of Trade and Industry Department of Art and Culture as well as government agencies dealing with craft organisations could continue providing training on new product design and development, product quality management, pricing, marketing, financial management, legal aspects and distribution. Training could also be offered for craft producers to learn about craft retailers' needs and buyer behaviour. The Department of Trade and Industry Department of Art and Culture as well as government agencies dealing with craft organisations could also sponsor craft producers, assisting them in creating catalogues, attending craft exhibitions and accessing the Internet. This can be done at national, regional and local levels. More importantly, government needs to determine what kind of support should be made available to craft producers and assess the effectiveness of such programmes, since some might not be effective. Government could also strengthen support to reach more craft producers than they currently do.

Furthermore, government could look into strengthening the CCDI and establishing similar organisations across all provinces to offer services and support similar to that offered by the CCDI. The CCDI staff can be used to train staff in other regional craft development agencies. This would benefit crafters at local and regional level since they will become more competitive and will be able to close the market access gap. In addition to establishing agencies like the CCDI in other provinces, government needs to consider funding and supporting the formation and establishment of non-profit organisations at local level to support and assist in the marketing of craft products. Apart from helping with marketing craft products on behalf of craft producers, these organisations will help local crafters to receive training. Local organisations can also help to overcome the weaknesses of regional organisations like the CCDI that cannot effectively reach and target all crafters in the region for many reasons, including the inaccessibility of some crafters. Some crafters are not able to visit the CCDI or any other regional agency to make contact with its staff, therefore, a local agency will be beneficial being located closer to the producers. This local agency or non-profit organisation can also organise workshops and seminars for craft producers, and collect and disseminate market information on behalf of craft producers.

The local organisations can play the role of a marketing agent, while operating as non-profit organisations. This will help overcome the current challenge of lack of access to markets faced by craft producers. The local organisation will also help reduce the costs of acquiring products for craft retailers, who will be able to access different products from different craft producers in one location. This, in turn, will enable craft producers to earn a reasonable profit from their products, since some of the costs will be reduced. The organisation might also assist craft producers in sourcing quality and cost-effective raw materials as well as in bringing craft producers together to work as a cooperative.

### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

A structured questionnaire was distributed among craft retailers in SA to investigate the stages in the buying process that craft retailers go through when buying craft products. There were no questions of a personal and private nature. The questionnaire cover letter was attached, which requested craft retailers to voluntarily take part into the research by completing the questionnaire. Craft retailers were requested to sign the consent form as proof that they voluntarily participated in the study. The ethics clearance form was completed and submitted to, and acknowledged by, the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences. Data were treated with confidentiality.

### **CONCLUSION**

A list of 16 stages was provided based on the literature review and interviews. The majority of craft retailers (66%) go through a lengthy buying process consisting of 16 stages. This is an indication that the buying process of some craft retailers involves far more stages than those suggested in the existing literature. It is also an indication that craft product buying is a complex process and that craft retailers are involved in a new buy situation. This could be due to the lack of standards in the industry and the fact that craft producers are scattered all over the country.

Therefore, it is important for craft producers to ensure that they are aware of the needs of retailers for craft products and also to ensure that retailers are aware of them. As some small craft producers may not have the necessary skills to enter into negotiations with large retailers, this is an area where government could play an important role by providing training and other necessary support.

Craft retailers with different years of buying experience also exhibit similar buyer behaviour in going through the same number of buying stages, implying that experience does not play a role in the number of buying stages used.

### **LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

The study adopted a convenience sampling method. Only craft retailers that were easily accessible were targeted. The non-response error and the sampling error could not be determined. Although the study targeted craft retailers in SA, it was not possible to target retailers in all the provinces because of lack of data on craft retailers. Some of them were inaccessible because their phones were out of order or the retailers were no longer in operation. Some craft retailers were not willing to participate. It was also not possible to target equal numbers of different types of craft retailers, owing to convenience sampling, fewer large retailers, and because some of them were either not interested or they were difficult to get hold of. Owing to the nature of non-probability sampling, the respondents used in the study are not representative of the broader SA craft retail population. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised.

Another study could investigate what craft retailers do in the buying process and how they execute the process. The study could also investigate how different retailers define criteria such as quality. This study might not apply to international retailers. Therefore, another study could investigate the buyer behaviour of international craft retailers and compare the findings with those of the local retailers.

## AUTHOR INFORMATION

**K.M Makhitha** is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Logistics at Vaal University of Technology in South Africa.

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